

Published July 2021





To The Gloucester County Community

On behalf of the Gloucester County Board of Commissioners, we would like to acknowledge the hard work of the 75-member Economic Recovery Collaborative. This report demonstrates initiatives taken to better our county, and the collective mindset of our community's decision-makers in industry, small business, education and government. These members came together to serve on five separate committees to strategically position our employers and workforce to take advantage of recovery resources, examine issues of access to technology and transportation, and better understand the unique needs of under-resourced communities, and minority and women-owned businesses. Gloucester County is the only New Jersey county to gather community input in an effort to successfully distribute recovery funding for business and industry sectors, as well as communities and residents. Our county stands as a leader in proactive economic recovery initiatives.

Now, the real work begins. With the Economic Recovery Collaborative's work complete, the county will join forces with government entities, financial and educational institutions, and many more to develop actionable plans, and amass resources for implementation. This will not be an easy task, but the community's cohesive, determined, steadfast-approach to facing the COVD-19 pandemic demonstrates the way in which we approach every challenge: we leverage our partnerships to accomplish great things, together. Rebuilding the regional economy is not something we expected we'd have to tackle, but the challenge lies before us nonetheless. Thanks to the time, energy, talent and insight of the Economic Recovery Collaborative, we stand ready - the best is yet to come.

Sincerely,

ROBERT M. DAMMINGER

Director of the Gloucester County Board of Commissioners

HEATHER SIMMONS

Gloucester County Commissioner
Liaison to Economic Development and Public Works





INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The global pandemic has impacted every aspect of our communities, businesses, and livelihoods in the South Jersey region, and is unlike any other public health crisis we have ever experienced. Mandated stayat-home orders were issued, companies were forced to close, historic levels of unemployment claims were filed, and communities struggled to gain access to public health, education, and technology in our new, virtual world.

Gloucester County has always been able to effectively mobilize in a crisis situation to serve and protect our residents and business community. To that end, our overall priorities this year are focused squarely on stemming the tide of the disease, administering vaccinations to our population, and rebuilding the local economy - these priorities are of the highest order.



TO THAT, OUR OVERALL
PRIORITIES THIS YEAR ARE
FOCUSED SQUARELY ON
STEMMING THE TIDE OF THE
DISEASE, ADMINISTERING
VACCINATIONS TO OUR
POPULATION, AND
REBUILDING THE LOCAL
ECONOMY - THESE PRIORITIES
ARE OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.



- COMMISSIONER HEATHER SIMMONS

Liaison to Economic Development and Public Works

Throughout the early months of 2021, Gloucester County--along with the National Guard, FEMA, and other state and local agencies--efficiently and rapidly administered vaccinations to the majority of Gloucester County's residents. As containing the public health crisis is the impetus to moving forward with economic recovery, we also focused on building economic resiliency, addressing needs



of emerging industries, and enhancing education, training/retraining initiatives and public policy. As a county, we are looking beyond restoration of the pre-COVID status quo. We are focused on creating opportunities for growth and economic vibrancy, while addressing barriers to economic success and examining issues of equity and access.

In January 2021, the Gloucester County
Commissioners embarked on recovery
efforts by convening the Gloucester
County Economic Recovery Collaborative
to explore, prioritize and execute shortterm and long-term strategies to benefit all
industry sectors and communities that have
been negatively impacted by the COVID-19
crisis. The Gloucester County Economic
Recovery Collaborative was developed with
the explicit goal of putting people back
to work and restoring economic vitality
by developing strategies for economic
recovery, resilience, equity and growth.

The Collaborative, consisting of 75 business leaders, education partners, government officials and community stakeholders, began its efforts of building economic resiliency, enhanced access to education and training, attracting new businesses and creating jobs. The Collaborative findings include recommendations to address barriers to economic success and examine

issues of access to education, technology and transportation. The focus of the group's priority recommendations revolve around investing in communities, supporting emerging industries, and creating opportunities that foster innovation and entrepreneurship in alignment with higher education institutions. By harnessing the collective expertise of our community stakeholders, the Gloucester County **Economic Recovery Collaborative** produced this Economic Recovery Report that includes practical, measurable, and attainable short and long-term recommendations for economic recovery throughout our communities.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

In order to develop an in-depth understanding of issues and create a plan of action to align with the mission and vision of the Economic Recovery Collaborative, the group was divided into five committees, each working towards very specific sets of goals and objectives. Each committee was led by two co-chairs representing business, industry, education, and/or government entities with subject matter expertise in related fields. We would like to recognize and thank our committee co-chairs for their outstanding leadership and vision throughout this process.

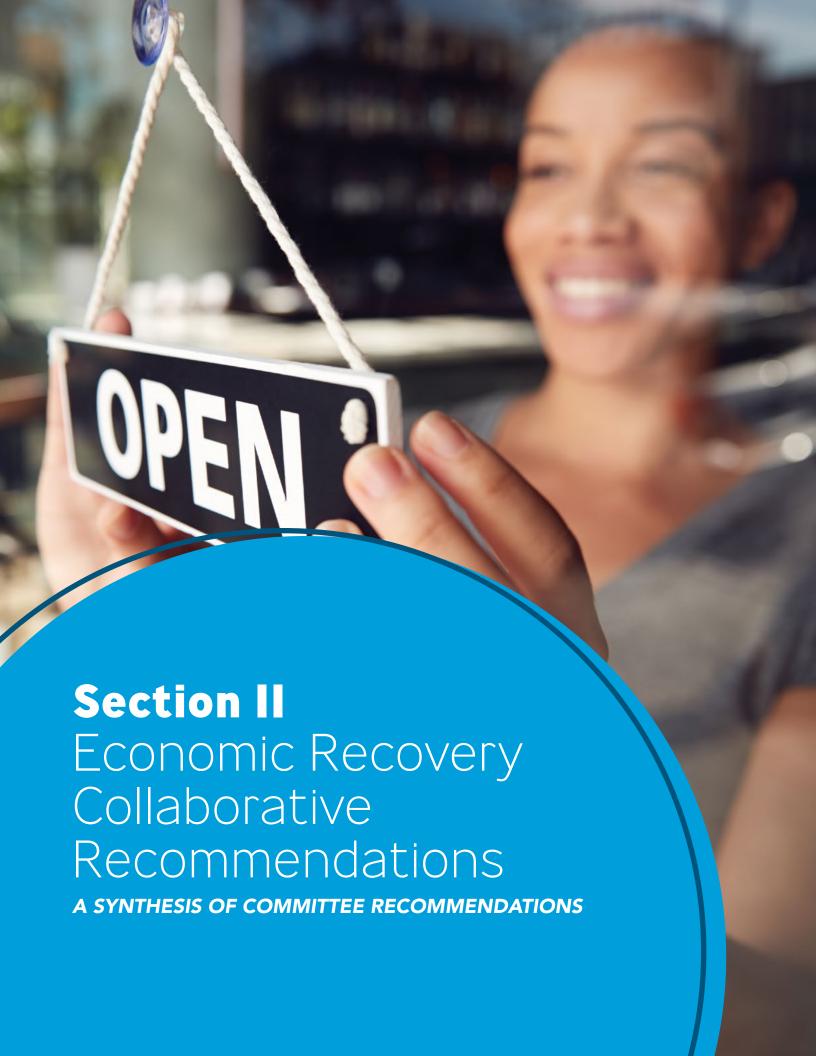


FINANCIAL RESOURCES/SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE	Michelle Bruner, Economic Development Coordinator, Mantua Township & Daniel Sulpizio, Executive Vice President/COO, South Jersey Federal Credit Union
TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE	Joseph Divis, Interim President, AT&T New Jersey & Timothy Jennings, President/CEO, TeleCorp, Inc.
EQUITY AND ACCESS COMMITTEE	Randee Davidson, Executive Director, Caree and Technical Education, Rowan College of South Jersey & Dr. Monika Williams Shealey, Senior Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Rowan University
EMERGING INDUSTRY COMMITTEE	John Burzichelli, Deputy Speaker, New Jersey State Assembly & Dr. Patricia Claghorn, Dean of Business, Rowan Colleg of South Jersey
PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE	Lou Manzo, Harrison Township Mayor & Sus Perron, President/CEO, Abilities Solutions

Special thanks are equally extended to Gloucester County staff who were assigned to assist and monitor the activities and progress of each committee, including:

Thomas Bianco, Michelle Shirey, Eileen Gallo, Wendy Carey, Stephen Hart, Christina Velazquez, Bridget DiGiambattista and Daniele Spence.





Each Economic Recovery Collaborative Committee met at least three times between February and May to develop goals, objectives, strategies and recommendations for economic recovery efforts. Each group was asked to succinctly summarize their thoughts and develop a list of practical, achievable, measurable recommendations to be compiled in this final report and synthesized into priority recommendations. The next step in the process will be for the County to engage with government, industry, small business education and the community yet again to develop plans and amass resources for implementation. Some members of the Collaborative team may choose to extend their participation, providing their time and talent to these next steps.

Throughout the Economic Recovery
Collaborative process, common themes

emerged from all five committees related to access to transportation, access to technology, development of centralized hubs for community resources and industry attraction and retention, and enhanced communication with our business community and residents. The Gloucester County Board of Commissioners and Gloucester County Department of Economic Development have synthesized the complete list of committee recommendations into the following nine, action-oriented recommendations. Implementation of these recommendations has the potential to support not only Gloucester County's economic recovery but to also provide a means to create economic opportunity in our region for decades to come. They also position Gloucester County and its communities to strategize the recovery funding being made available by the federal and state government.





1. Create an Economic Development "Navigator" position to leverage the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's Economic Recovery Incentive packages to attract high quality jobs and industries to Gloucester County. By seeking partnership with NJEDA on this initiative, we will be able to provide enhanced financing and business development to local businesses and new industries looking to relocate to Gloucester County.



2. Develop one or more Business Information Hubs for businesses and workforce to find resources and opportunities, support an entrepreneurial ecosystem and provide access to technology/tech instruction. The Hubs will include, among other things, a resource listing and interactive business plan navigator hosted on an online platform.



3. Identify county areas in need of broadband. Prioritize and use federal dollars to build a plan to resolve technology issues in areas such as Elk, South Harrison, Franklin and other rural areas in need.



4. Identify public transportation needs and increase funding to shuttle services such as the East/West Community Shuttle to better serve industrial parks, educational institutions, healthcare facilities and anticipated Glassboro-Camden Light Rail stops, all focused on enhancing transportation equity and access in underserved communities.



5. Provide direct support funds to small businesses with a primary focus on women and minority-owned businesses.





6. Enhance training and education for new and expanding industries, with focus on alternative energy (especially offshore wind), advanced manufacturing, cannabis, tourism and hospitality, and film. Align workforce and technical education programs at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology, the Gloucester County Workforce Development Board, Rowan College of South Jersey and Rowan University with industry employment opportunities and Rowan University's Global Solutions Hub building being planned for Rowan's West Campus.



7. Enhance training, education, and employment opportunities for our neurodiverse population by leveraging our training partnership with WDB and RCSJ and incentivizing private businesses participation.

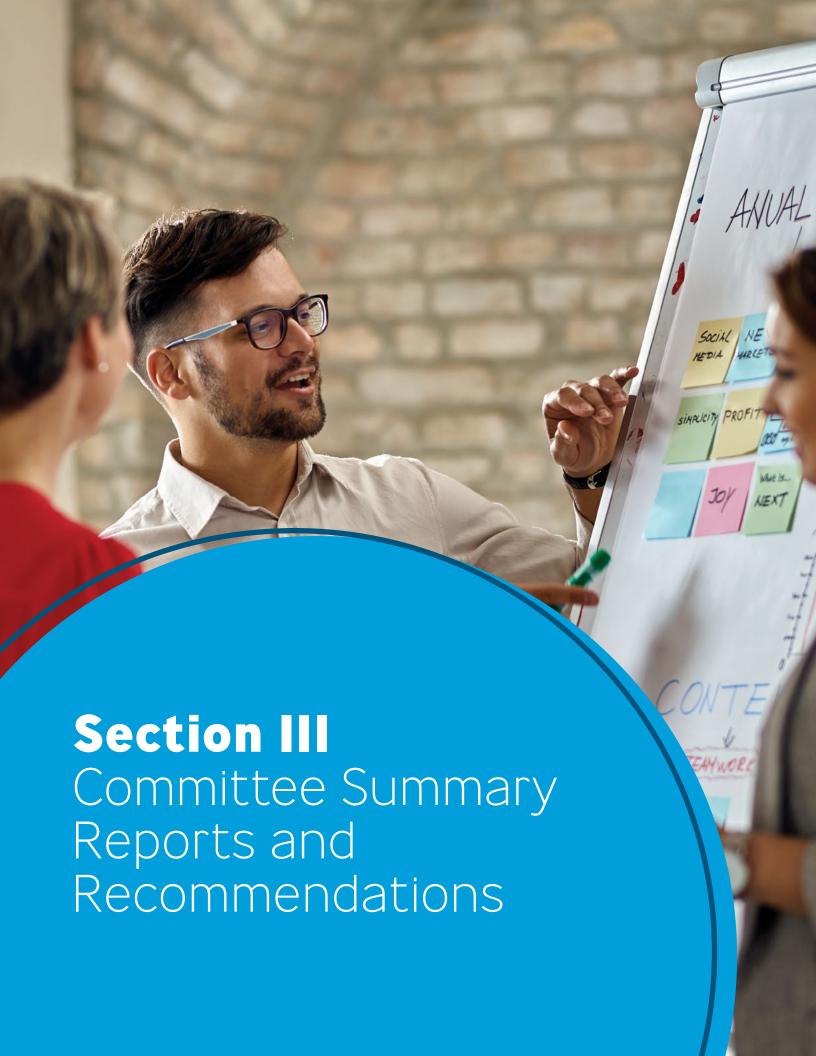


8. Creation of a "shovel-ready" properties inventory and marketing plan, including compilation and analysis of data for selected sites for development and paying special attention to locations near/around Rowan University's West Campus, greenfields and brownfields properties.



9. Provide promotional, technical, and financial support to the tourism and hospitality industry as well as outdoor recreation facilities and County parks. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism spending in Gloucester County decreased by 27.1%, and direct industry employment in Gloucester County dropped 25.3%, putting this industry at high risk of slower recovery.





FINANCIAL RESOURCES & SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS:



MICHELLE BRUNER
Economic Development
Coordinator,
Mantua Township



DANIEL SULPIZIO
Executive Vice
President/COO,
South Jersey Federal
Credit Union



SUMMARY

The Financial Resources and Small Business Subcommittee focused negative effects of the COVID-19 beyond restoring the pre-COVID status quo, including strategies to secure financial resources and new investments for our business train and foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem committed to innovation looked to develop enhanced investment opportunities for the local small business community, collaboration and diversification based on economic conditions.

Access to capital is available through a strong network of banks and community development funding institutions, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, County and State resources. What lacks is the awareness of how to utilize resources, as well as the support from institutions that will help an entrepreneur develop the right plan. Creating an awareness plan that is focused and strategic is key to the success of new business startup companies and entrepreneurs.

- Create a brand-new information hub:
 County-created to include the resources
 list that we created for this subcommittee.
- Coordinate with each agency to confirm how their resources and links are displayed.
- Create a phone hotline: The County should have a real live agency representative (possibly volunteer college students or others) when the brand-new hub is created to take calls and transfer to proper agency.
- Market innovations for these resources



- could be: Video(s): "Help" / "How To Find Out" / "Kick – Off" "Chat" Feature (to live chat questions and answers)
- Coordination between all Chambers of Commerce to launch any new marketing alerts for this endeavor. Each would have identical marketing pieces launched on their social media tools at the same time and kick-off date.
- County should create a partnership network with state, federal and local agencies that they can promote with a goal of centralized support for the

- creation and growth of new venture ideas. Many residents are not aware of County services.
 - Mass Promotional Press Release and marketing materials with a HARD push to highlight:
 - Gloucester County
 Economic Development
 Building & Workforce
 Development
 - American Job Center, etc.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS:



JOSEPH DIVIS
Interim President,
AT&T New Jersey



TIMOTHY JENNINGS
President/CEO,
TeleCorp, Inc.



SUMMARY

The Technology Subcommittee was responsible for developing strategies to support and broaden investments in technology and technology education; reimagine and adapt to the "new normal;" and facilitate implementation of a stronger technology capacity in County communities.

While independent in its task and review of the technology and connectivity landscape in the County, the Technology Subcommittee was also cognizant of its supportive role to the objectives of the other Subcommittees. Much of the work to be considered as a result of the Economic Recovery Collaborative – be it to bolster small businesses, enable equitable opportunity across communities, or prepare for new economic initiatives – will be enabled as a result of robust connectivity, digital access and digital literacy. It was also clear during the various encounters that more information is needed to fully understand perceived and actual issues with technology and connectivity in the County; the

technology challenges unique to small business; and intertwined roles of County government (including the library system), educational institutions and the private sector.

- Collectively expand access to hardware, digital literacy, and the internet for underserved populations (e.g. develop solutions to fund connectivity and devices). Distinguish between broadband availability and challenges of access (which may be affordability, literacy or both).
- Work with tech experts and community groups to collect, refurbish and distribute hardware to individuals and families.
- Leverage federal/state/private funding for technology acquisition and implementation.
- Leverage County and municipal buildings as tech 'hubs'; the library system is already thoughtful about this role and its experience should be tapped.
- Monitor and publicize programs which can assist with Internet affordability.
- Have a better sense of which pockets of the County do not have access or



- availability so thoughtful and databased solutions can be considered.
- Accurate mapping is critical to ensure that solutions are targeted to reach specific unserved locations.
- Engage respected community
 organizations to inform needs and assist
 in solutions; for instance, creation of
 'digital navigator' programs to assist
 in basic tech skill development and
 encouragement of adoption.
- Examine how accessible government services, programs and information is to various community sectors; with so many relief and recovery programs the County can explore how to ease the information challenge for small and medium businesses and non-profits.
- Community engagement, outreach, and awareness are built into efforts so that individuals, families, businesses know where to find and access resources and support.
- Analyze and identify the viability of Smart TV Applications for engagement and education purposes for end users. This to accommodate those with limited or no access to these resources- those with no transportation, with dependent care issues, with certain disabilities, and for small business owners who literally cannot leave their enterprises to take advantage of offsite training.

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER **OPPORTUNITIES** WILL REQUIRE **DIGITAL ACCESS** AND DIGITAL **FLUENCY. WE MUST BEGIN TO** TREAT INTERNET **CONNECTIVITY AS** A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT, OR IT WILL **BECOME THE** GREATEST BARRIER TO EQUITY IN OUR GENERATION.

- REBECCA FISHMAN LIPSEY

President & CEO of The Miami Foundation





EQUITY & ACCESS COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS:



RANDEE DAVIDSON Executive Director, Career and Technical Education, Rowan College of South Jersey



WILLIAMS SHEALEY Senior Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Rowan University

DR. MONIKA

SUMMARY

This committee was formed to

issues that inhibit access to education and employment, identify opportunities for address the digital divide that inhibits access to education and



minority-owned businesses Access to education and employment opportunities is key to an individual's success and the cornerstone for prosperity and fulfillment. Education lessens more opportunities. Education Current partnerships between access for transit-dependent individuals is needed. The great opportunity to provide also certifications and business

training that will assist the future workforce and entrepreneurs on all levels to have the ability to flourish

- Create obtainable technology resources to business and community; expand technology in parts of County that are lacking.
- Transportation access Transportation schedules and funding for public transportation for both employment and educational needs for individuals should be evaluated.
 - Partnerships between public transit agencies and private firms to expand employment access for transit-dependent workers especially where existing employment. Aligned shift schedules with bus timetables to promote equitable access to employment for disconnected workers.
 - Develop a platform to bridge the transportation gap regarding access to resources for Employers and Employees.
- Research further funding



- opportunities to sustain and expand current local transportation services to meet current and future demand.
- Leverage Rowan University & Rowan
 College of South Jersey as a resource
 for all business to develop talent from
 degreed education to certificate training.
- Communicate resources available to eliminate barriers to technology access, funding resources, and educational and employment opportunities.
- Work with local Employers and Employees to determine the best schedule and use of local services and resources to accommodate the largest target market.
- Drive and market Gloucester County Economic & Workforce Development as a first stop for business (point team) to direct next steps.
- Expand partnership with Business Organizations and Financial

- institutions beyond the County.
- Provide entrepreneurial training with mentors and advisors for successful business ventures.
- Create "How to" documents that will assist businesses with accessing quality employees, training, networking and financial opportunities and will promote entrepreneurship.
- Provide information for students and trainees as they navigate the initial transition from education to work.
- Investments in apprenticeships that help workers affordably gain indemand skills and help employers develop and shape a pipeline of skilled workers.
- Encourage employers to rethink how they use educational attainment in evaluating and hiring potential talent given the underutilization of existing talent among non-degree holders.





EMERGING INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS:



JOHN BURZICHELLI
Deputy Speaker,
New Jersey
State Assembly



DR. PATRICIA CLAGHORN
Dean of Business,
Rowan College of
South Jersey

SUMMARY

From the inception of the existence of the Emerging Industry Committee, the members focused on the Wind and Cannabis Industries; therefore, when completing the SWOT Analysis and recommendations, those industries served as the backdrop for the discussions.

Per the committee's analysis, the group members felt that our geographic location in the state, availability of land to grow, and extensive education, government, and business partnerships positioned us well for success. That being said, there were concerns for the red tape, bureaucracy, and the multitude of rules and regulations that are associated with new opportunities



and funding streams. Further, the lack of community understanding and support for new industries threatens potential growth and should be addressed as a recommendation of this committee.

Ultimately, the recommendations of this committee centered on a need for enhanced communication and a "one stop" approach for providing information and resources to those companies and individuals interested in pursuing the development or expansion of their businesses in emerging industries.

- Market new growth programs and opportunities via social media, with potential for a "portal".
- Communicate opportunities, e.g., events, county/town via existing

- communication channels.
- Communicate and monitor access and equity issues for those affected by social injustice.
- Create a "One Stop" concept, through which new entrants in emerging industry could be directed to all resources.
- Create a "Play Book" for municipalities that want to promote growth in emerging industries such as cannabis.
- Investigate and utilize best practices, available from those with more experience in the industry.
- Network to other businesses/ industries to promote growth
- Investigate alternative/new products, e.g., hemp.
- Increase training opportunities for emerging industries, e.g., safety training for Off-Shore Wind.
- Support an entrepreneurial ecosystem
- (K-12 bridge/education and career pathways, scholarship opportunities, capture of local talent, connection to resources).



PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

CO-CHAIRS:



LOU MANZO Mayor, Harrison Township



SUSAN PERRON President/CEO. **Abilities Solutions**

SUMMARY

dialogue among Commissioner Heather Simmons and Co-Chairs took place to establish the overall employment, ensuring that these

populations such as persons with an inclusive workforce that creates and all persons was the overall mission and vision for this committee. During the early part of 2021, the committee surveyed the Gloucester County municipalities and asked nine



the local area's community outreach efforts as well as government and economic related issues. Some results were expected: most towns have **Economic Development Committees** local webpages to communicate with residents and businesses. serve the business community. Most building collaborations with the neurodiverse community, and navigating government systems. Our goals are to develop a toolkit to assist municipalities with effective industry, government agencies and NGOs, foster business and education

The Public Policy and Government

Relations Committee recognizes the need to deliver information and implement new projects in a way that enhances communication, access, and consistency.

- Develop a plan for effective communication, advocacy and education regarding needs and opportunities.
- Include white papers that put forth models of partnerships that can be used by others to advance an agenda of a fully inclusive workforce.
 - Industry, including small business
 - Local, County and State government
 - Non-Profit entities
- Establish a mechanism to keep the plan and objectives at the forefront of public policy initiatives to ensure that no one is left out and new opportunities are created that leverage existing resources and create new ones.
- Develop tools to effectively communicate local recovery needs to public officials.
- Facilitate relationships among industry, government agencies and NGOs
- Foster business and education alliances that advocate for "common good" policy initiatives.
- Bolster efforts that adequately serve South Jersey economic interests.





In closing, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gloucester County economy thrived with a diverse mixture of agri-business and tourism, manufacturing, heavy industry, commercial enterprise and innovative technology companies spurring from the South Jersey Technology Park at Rowan University. Unemployment was at a historic low and wages were organically increasing in the region due to strong market demand for labor. Although the economy has vastly changed over the last year due to the pandemic, Gloucester County remains a bustling county with a superior location, ample recreation facilities and a vibrant business community. In spite of the pandemic, the county has created and fostered opportunities for its residents and businesses alike. With just over 14,000 businesses still operating in Gloucester County, there is no doubt this is a prime location for the sustainable growth of a diverse mix of industries and small businesses. Through the collaboration of public officials, the business community, educational partners, and other community stakeholders,



BUSINESSES ARE STILL
OPERATING IN GLOUCESTER
COUNTY, THERE IS NO DOUBT
THIS IS A PRIME LOCATION FOR
THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF
A DIVERSE MIX OF INDUSTRIES
AND SMALL BUSINESSES.

- ROBERT M. DAMMINGER
Director of the Gloucester County
Board of Commissioners

the Gloucester County Economic Recovery
Collaborative has recognized the undeniable
strength and resiliency of our community.
Although the task at hand was a large
one, the Economic Recovery Collaborative
strategically developed practical, measurable,
achievable recommendations, with focus on
the priority areas outlined here. This final
report prioritizes the needs for comprehensive
economic recovery in Gloucester County,
highlights opportunities for the continued
growth of our wonderful community, and
the groundwork for the months and years of
recovery work that lies ahead.



Acknowledgement

WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE ENTIRE ECONOMIC RECOVERY COLLABORATIVE TEAM. THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ENDEAVOR WILL IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY FOR YEARS TO COME.

EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Assemblyman John Burzichelli

Co-Chair

Dr. Patricia Claghorn

Co-Chair

Mayor Dale Archer

Councilman Kenneth Barnshaw

Laura Basara

Joseph A. Brigandi, Jr.

Robert Bullard

Committeeman Dave Deegan

Glenn Donelson

Councilwoman Katherine Falcone

Angelo Gabriele

Councilman Phil Hagerty

Stephen Kozachyn

Dr. Susan Lehrman

Nancy Mozzachio

Councilwoman Christina Pierce

Ted Schmidt

Kevin Schroeder

George Strachan

Amanda Terpstra

FINANCIAL RESOURCES & SMALL BUSINESS

Daniel Sulpizio

Co-Chair

Michelle Bruner

Co-Chair

Gregory Carlisle

Lisa Carney

Bob Cleveland

Council Member David Flaherty

Christina Fuentes

Council Member Diane Hale

Melissa Jackson

Dr. Thomas Kadar

Marc Kamp

Charlie Kirchner

Council Member Travis Lawrence

Anthony Martinez

Mayor Paul Medany

Nancy Mozzachio

Robert Palumbo

Maggie Peters

Harry Stone

Diane Ubinger

Les Vail

Laura Wallick

TECHNOLOGY

Joseph Divis

Co-Chair

Timothy Jennings

Co-Chair

Ralph Bingham

Irene Crespo

Susan Miller

Shawn Newman

Timothy B. Rollender

AJ Stoll

Jennifer Young

ACCESS & EQUITY

Dr. Monika Williams Shealey

Co-Chair

Randee Davidson

Co-Chair

Ralph Bingham

Joseph Carr

Council Member David Flaherty

Frances Harwell

Deputy Mayor Natalie Matthias

Jared Rollins

Michael Snyder

Amanda Terpstra

Les Vail

Dr. Michelle Turner-Wood

PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Mayor Lou Manzo

Co-Chair

Susan Perron

Co-Chair

Marlene Asselta

Jane Asselta

Joseph A. Brigandi, Jr.

Cari Burke

Committeewoman Julie DeLaurentis

Council Member David Flaherty

Kimberly Gober

Luanne Hughes

Dennis McNulty

Floyd Nesse

GLOUCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ROBERT M. DAMMINGER

Director

FRANK J. DIMARCO

Deputy Director

HEATHER SIMMONS

Liaison to Economic Development and Public Works

LYMAN BARNES

DANIEL CHRISTY

JAMES B. JEFFERSON

JAMES J. LAVENDER, Ed.D.

